



Alcohol, Energy Drinks, and Youth: A Dangerous Mix

Source: Marin Institute and the
Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation (PIRE)



Montana Department of Transportation

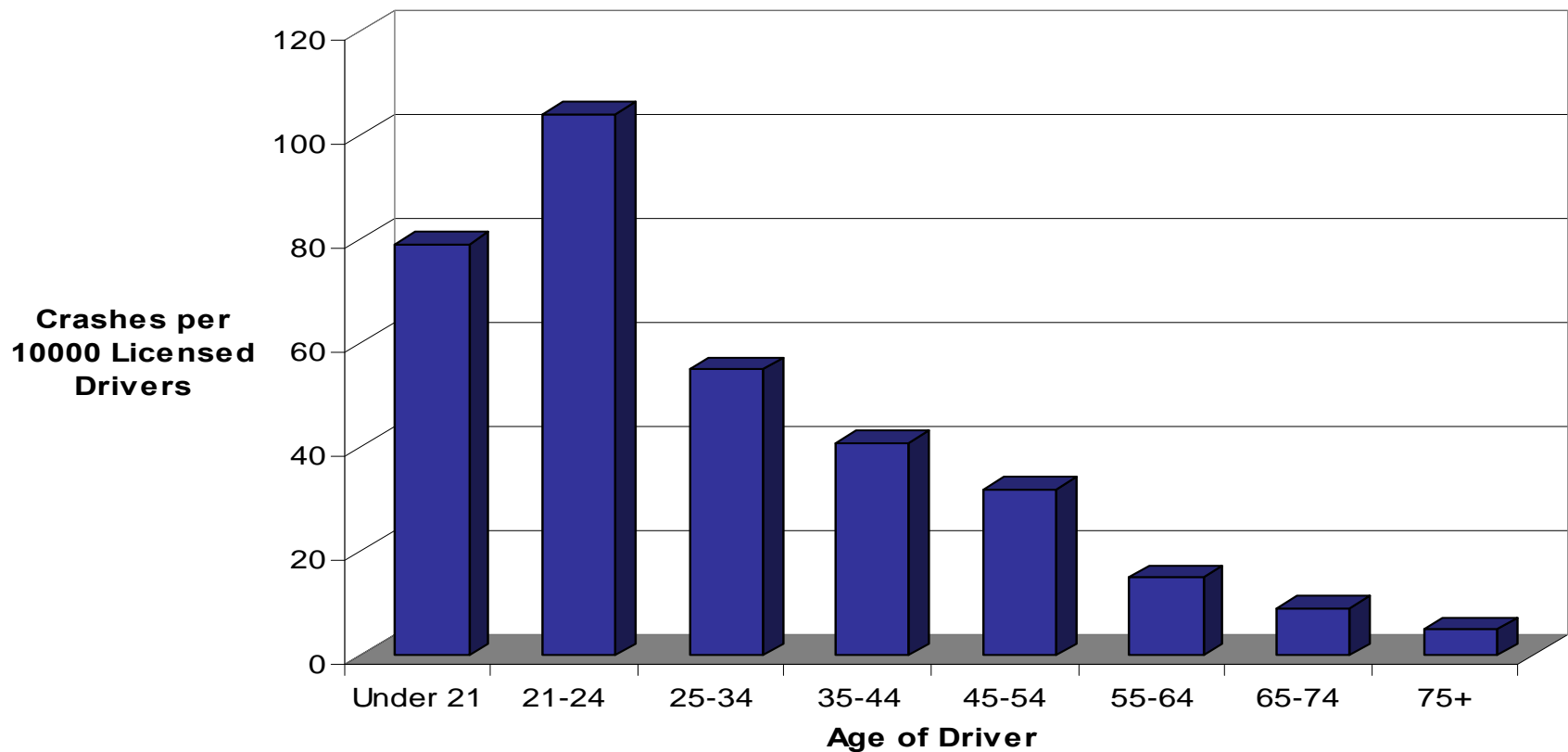


Presented by
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Montana Department of Transportation
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Alcohol/Drug Related Crashes by Age of Driver - 2007





FORMULA FOR GETTING KIDS HOOKED

start with
SUGARY SOFT DRINKS



add caffeine
ENERGY DRINKS



add alcohol
ALCOHOLIC ENERGY DRINKS





Exploding Popularity of Energy Drinks

- 500 new energy drink products introduced worldwide in 2006
- Energy drink sales = \$3.2 billion
- 31 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds are regular consumers v. 22 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds





Brand Confusion

Which Contain Alcohol?



Brand Confusion

Which Contain Alcohol?



Rockstar Brand Confusion

“This new line of alcoholic beverage product is extremely similar in look and feel to the popular energy drinks that contain no alcohol. Youth are at risk when clerks and retailers cannot differentiate between nonalcoholic and alcoholic beverages being sold.”



-- Chris Lilly, Kentucky Alcoholic Beverage Control
(May 2007)



Only non-alcoholic brands have nutrition facts and ingredients listed





Most of the Time Alcohol Brands Cost Less

Price Comparison—Three alcoholic brands cost about 25 percent less than three nonalcoholic brands.²⁹

Alcoholic Brands

■ Rockstar 21	\$1.59
■ Sparks	\$1.53
■ Tilt	\$1.53

Nonalcoholic Brands

■ Rockstar Juiced	\$2.03
■ Lost Energy	\$2.07
■ SoBe Adrenaline Rush	\$2.03



Viral Marketing

“We spent a significant amount of budget on Internet-related activities. We invited consumers to comment on the Web site and post comments without editing them, creating a community of Sparks users who shared ideas and experiences.”

Minott Wessinger, inventor of Sparks

Viral Marketing – Sparks Website

Hey there Sparks, I have totally switched from beer (YUK) to Sparks now!! I have also started a low carb diet and sure enough Sparks is there for me with their low carb drink "Sparks Light". I just want to thank you guys for thinking of the low carb dieters!!!! YOU ARE THE BEST!



My boyfriend just came home with a can of this stuff. He asked me if I wanted a drink. I asked him what it was. He said just try it. I did. I LOVE IT. I hate beer and liquor is pricey at some bars. This stuff is awesome!!



Sparks on MySpace

Sparks Pals Chat Group

“We all know that sparks is the ..1 alcohol + energy hybrid drink of all time, now we have a group to share this knowledge. About time!”



Sparks on Facebook Chat Groups



- Drink Sparks, Die Young
- Sparks Addicts Anonymous
- Sparks baby!
- I drink Sparks every day of my life



Public Health Implications

- Alcohol + Caffeine = “Wide awake drunk”
- Caffeine masks alcohol’s intoxicating effects, promotes risk taking
- Youth most likely to take risks



Wake Forest / NC Study

Students who consumed alcohol with energy drinks were **twice as likely** to:

- be hurt or injured
- require medical attention
- ride with an intoxicated driver
- be taken advantage of sexually
- take advantage of someone else sexually



Underage Alcohol Use

- Damages developing brain
- Causes impaired judgement
- Leads to future alcohol addiction



What Can Be Done?

- **Educate others (including servers/sellers)**
- **Ban free distribution of energy drinks**
- **Pressure corporations that sell these drinks**
- **Tax energy drinks as spirits, not beer**



Our Common Goal

SAVING LIVES
on Montana's roads

For more information

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